

Health and Safety Bulletin

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Whoops!

Most of us have had the experience of watching someone slip, either in person or on the TV, and smiling or laughing at the awkward movements they make as they try to remain upright. However, slips, trips and falls on the same level are the biggest cause of RIDDOR reportable injuries in Great Britain – in fact, in 2021-22 they caused 30% of the non-fatal RIDDOR reportable injuries; 46% of the specified injuries and 24% of the over seven-day injuries reported. This isn't surprising when you recognise that slip and trip hazards occur in every single workplace – they are even present when people are working from home.

What are the legal requirements for managing slips and trips?

In addition to the generic requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act to protect employees and anyone who might be affected by their activities so far as is reasonably practicable, there are also specific legal requirements for employers to manage slip and trip hazards. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations require floors to be suitable, in good condition and free from obstruction.

Organisations can identify inherent slip and trip hazards associated with work activities through task risk assessments; for example, if workers are routinely required to carry around open containers of non-hazardous liquids that could spill on the floor; or if workers are regularly using hand held powered equipment, leaving trailing cables across walkways.

However, some slip and trip hazards can occur because of unexpected conditions, such as extremely windy weather causing roof damage that results in water leaking into a building. So, in addition to the task risk assessments, organisations need formal or informal procedures that allow workers to report such hazards and to ensure action is taken in a timely manner.

Helpful resources

The HSE has a variety of useful resources to support organisations managing slip and trip hazards.

- Hazard spotting checklist <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck4.pdf>
- Slip and trip mapping tool - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/mappingtool.pdf>
- Slips and trips online training - <https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/slips-and-trips>

Some insurance companies also offer bursaries to their clients – these can be used for slip testing of floors, for example. To find out more information about these listen to the podcast “ the hidden secret of insurance risk management bursaries“ at [Chris Gill on the hidden secret of insurance risk management bursaries \(spotify.com\)](#).

Conclusion

Accidents involving slips and trips can have very serious consequences, but the hazards creating these risks can be easily overlooked. Increasing awareness and encouraging every worker to take personal responsibility for dealing with these hazards is vital.

Recently issued health and safety information:

- Work right campaign – asbestos and you <https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/asbestos/>
- Work right campaign – working minds in agriculture <https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/workingminds/>
- World Health Organisation – guidelines on mental health at work <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240053052>
- Worksafe e-learning on human factors [E-learning module: Human Factors | Ngā Āhua Tangata | Health Quality & Safety Commission \(hqsc.govt.nz\)](https://www.humanfactors.govt.nz/)
- Managing psychosocial hazards at work https://www.safewor.kaust.edu.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/model_code_of_practice_-_managing_psychosocial_hazards_at_work_25082022_0.pdf
- Reducing trapping injuries in MEWPS <https://www.cpa.uk.net/safety-and-technical-publications/plant-safety-group>

HSE proactive inspections reduced

A series of Freedom of Information requests by the Unite trade union has highlighted there has been a significant reduction in proactive inspections by the HSE in the construction sector since 2013-14 – by over 30%. However, some of this decline was caused by restrictions during the COVID pandemic.

There was a significant variation in the reduction within regions with Wales (-57%), Southeast England (-51%) and London (-46%) showing the largest falls. The latest HSE statistics showed that 25% of GB work-related fatalities in 2021/22 involved construction sector workers.

Case Law update

This issue focuses on cases involving slips and trips

A manufacturing company was fined **£20,000** with **£4,952** costs after a worker's hand was partially severed when it was caught in machinery. The worker had been operating a vertical boring machine when he stepped on to the rotating table to check the internal boring cut but slipped and fell on the table. On his third attempt to steady himself after slipping, his hand was drawn into the in-running nip, and he suffered a partially severed hand. The HSE investigation found that there was inadequate guarding to prevent access to dangerous parts of the machinery and an inadequate risk assessment. It had become custom and practice to walk on the rotating machine table during operation of the machine.

Morrisons Supermarkets were prosecuted after an employee slipped after new terrazzo tiles had been installed – the store

had been warned about the slipperiness of the tiles when contaminated by oil or grease during a routine visit by an Environmental Health Officer. The employee fractured her right elbow when she fell and had to undergo three operations. Morrisons were fined **£17,500** with costs of **£32,482**

A Leeds-based company was prosecuted after a worker suffered serious injuries to his hand when it came into contact with the drive chain of a conveyor. The worker was clearing up after completing a job on a freezer when he slipped on the icy floor. He instinctively put out his right hand to steady himself but as he did so it struck the drive chain of a moving conveyor, taking the tips off two of his fingers down to the first joint, and injuring a third. He was off work for four weeks but was eventually able to return to work. The HSE investigation found the safety guard had been removed from the chain some time

previously, which meant that workers were not protected from dangerous moving parts and that there had been an accumulation of ice on the floor due to a problem with the freezer doors. The ice had not been cleared so the floor was very slippery. The company, was fined **£8,500** and ordered to pay **£794** in costs

About Clwyd Associates...

We are a management consultancy, focusing on health and safety, and SAP based in the Midlands.

In business since 2000, we employ consultants with at least 15 years practical experience backed up by recognized professional and academic qualifications - ensuring our clients receive first class service.



Clunk, click every trip

The Department for Transport's (DfT) most recent reported road casualty statistics have highlighted some alarming trends associated with the use of seatbelts.

There were 1558 road deaths in 2022 – a 7% increase from 2021, but still lower than pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

Accidents resulting in car occupant fatalities indicates that 40% of young occupants (aged 17-29) who were killed in 2022 were not wearing seatbelts. 20% of

motorists over 60 who were killed were not wearing seatbelts.

The statistics also highlighted an increase in deaths of car users travelling between 18:00 and 08:00; nearly 50% of those killed were not wearing a seatbelt.

RoSPA's analysis of the figures focused on the penalties for those caught not wearing a seatbelt – £500 for drivers. RoSPA has raised a concern that this is not enough of a deterrent.

The figures also show that although there was an increase in fatalities of main road users, there was a 21% reduction in pedal cyclist fatalities.

The DfT report is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2021/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2021>



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